Amendment dated February 20, 2007 Reply to Office Action of November 20, 2006

REMARKS

Docket No : 09868/000M893-US0

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 8, 24-30 and 40 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter

therein.

Claims 1, 9, 17, 33, 41, and 51-53 are amended without the introduction of new matter.

Claims 1-7, 9-23, 31-39, and 41-53 are pending.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102/103

Claims 1-7, 9-14, 17-23, 25-30, 33-39, 41-47, and 49-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.

§102(e) as anticipated by Bussick et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,070,502, herein "Bussick"). Further,

claims 8, 24 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Bussick in view of

Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,203,430, herein "Walker"). Claims 15, 16, 31, 32, 48, 52 and 53

were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Bussick in view of Berman (U.S. Patent

Application Publication No. 2003/0045345). The rejections of claims 8, 24-30 and 40 are moot

because the claims are canceled in the present response. Applicants respectfully traverse the above

rejections of claims 1-7, 9-23, 31-39, and 41-53.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a game machine, and amended to incorporate features

similar to those recited in previously presented claim 9 and to further clarify the features.

Specifically, amended claim 1 recites, among others, that:

count display modules, each of which correspondingly displaying said count for each of said reels, said count being measured

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13

Application No. 10/658,086 Docket No.: 09868/000M893-US0

Amendment dated February 20, 2007 Reply to Office Action of November 20, 2006

regions.

Referring to the non-limiting embodiment of the present invention shown in Fig. 3, each of

the count display modules 106-110 correspondingly displays a count for each of the reels 101-105.

by said measuring module in association with each of said plurality of

The count is measured by the measuring module in association with each of the regions such as

the count is measured by the measuring module in association with each of the regions such as

regions 112 and 113. Accordingly, a player can easily keep track of the count associated with each

of the reels.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that "Bussick does not

disclose displaying a count wherein the count is how many times that the symbol was displayed on

the reels." Then, the Examiner combines Walker with Bussick to supplement the deficiency of

Bussick.

However, Walker merely describes at column 3, lines 42-51 that "[t]he running count is

adjusted accordingly, including increasing the running count to reflect occurrences of one of the

tracked symbols and decreasing the running count to reflect expiration of occurrences of one of the

tracked symbols." In this regard, as shown in Fig. 3B of Walker, a tracked symbol meter 360

indicates the number of tracked symbols that have been accumulated by the player. The tracked symbol meter 360 indicates the number of tracked symbols only by symbols such as "bells."

oranges" and "bars," and not by reels. Accordingly, Walker's tracked symbol meter does not

correspondingly display the number of tracked symbols for each of the reels. Thus, Walker fails to teach or suggest that each of the count display modules correspondingly displays the count for each

of the reels, and that the count is measured by the measuring module in association with each of the

regions, as recited in amended claim 1.

14

Docket No.: 09868/000M893-US0 Application No. 10/658.086 Amendment dated February 20, 2007

Reply to Office Action of November 20, 2006

With respect to Berman, the Examiner cites Berman merely to supplement the deficiency of

Bussick in that Bussick does not disclose the use of randomly generated special regions or randomly

generated paylines.2 Berman fails to teach or suggest that each of the count display modules

correspondingly displays the count for each of the reels, and that the count is measured by the

measuring module in association with each of the regions, as recited in amended claim 1.

Therefore, even if the teachings of the cited references of Bussick, Walker and Berman are

combined, the combined teachings do not obviate the above-noted features of amended claim 1.

Accordingly, amended claim 1 and claims dependent therefrom are patentably distinguishable over

the cited references, either taken individually or in combination.

Amended claims 17 and 33 and claims dependent therefrom are distinguishable over the

cited references, either taken individually or in combination, at least for the above reasons advanced

for amended claim 1 to the extent that claims 17 and 33 are amended similarly to amended claim 1.

Claim 9 is directed to a game machine, and amended to clarify subject matter recited.

Specifically, amended claim 9 now recites the features of a sub-symbol display module as follows:

a sub-symbol display module provided independently from said reel display module, the sub-symbol display module displaying at

least one of a plurality of types of sub-symbols[.]

Referring to the non-limiting embodiment of the present invention shown in Fig. 3, main

symbols are displayed on the reels 101-105. The count display modules 106-110, which serve as

sub-symbol display modules, display multiple types of sub-symbols. As recited in amended claim

9, the sub-symbol display module is provided independently from the reel display module.

1 See Walker at column 6, lines 34-37.

<sup>2</sup> See the outstanding Office Action at page 6, fifth and sixth lines from the bottom.

Docket No.: 09868/000M893-US0 Application No. 10/658,086

Amendment dated February 20, 2007 Reply to Office Action of November 20, 2006

Accordingly, curiosity about the sub-symbol that will be displayed is provoked in a player. Also,

the player can easily keep track of the sub-symbol displayed in the sub-symbol display module.3

The Examiner states that Bussick discloses "an alternate method wherein instead of

replacing the symbols on the static display and changing display with wild symbols, the game

machine will replace one or more symbols with one or more different symbols," and that "Itlhis

replacement of symbols with subsymbols is done randomly in that the initial selection of symbols is

a random selection of symbols to be displayed on the reels."4

However, Bussick fails to disclose or suggest that a sub-symbol display module is provided

independently from the reel display module, as recited in amended claim 9. Bussick's invention

merely replaces symbols displayed in the reels with different symbols, and is not provided with a

sub-symbol display module that is independent from the reel display module. In this regard, the

present invention recited in amended claim 9 does not replace the main symbols by the sub-

symbols. In the present invention, the sub-symbol selection module randomly selects a sub-symbol

to be displayed in the sub-symbol display module that is provided independently from the reel

display module.

Therefore, the present invention recited in amended claim 9 is patentably distinguishable

over Bussick. Also, each of Walker and Berman fails to teach or suggest at least the above-noted

features of the sub-symbol display module recited in amended claim 9. Thus, even if the teachings

of the cited references are combined, the combined teachings do not obviate the present invention

recited in amended claim 9. Accordingly, amended claim 9 and claims dependent therefrom are

patentably distinguishable over the cited references, either taken individually or in combination.

3 See the Specification at, for example, page 20, line 5 to page 21, line 12.

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Reply to Office Action of November 20, 2006

Amended claim 41 and claims dependent therefrom are distinguishable over the cited

references, either taken individually or in combination, at least for the above reasons advanced for

amended claim 9 to the extent that claim 41 is amended similarly to amended claim 9.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-7,

9-23, 31-39, and 41-53.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to

be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to

pass this application to issue.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number

indicated below if the Examiner believes any issue can be resolved through either a Supplemental

Response or an Examiner's Amendment.

Dated: February 20, 2007

Respectfully submitted

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4 See the outstanding Office Action at page 4, second paragraph.

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